

# Attorney urges Betancourt to surrender

Police searching for man serving probationary sentence for crash

By JIM NEWTON  
News-Sun

Defense attorney Jed Stone said Tuesday morning he is urging his client Jeremy Betancourt to meet with him immediately to surrender after Betancourt was charged with escape for allegedly leaving a periodic imprisonment program. Stone declined to say whether he has been in contact with the 19-year-old, who is now wanted on a \$1 million arrest warrant. Betancourt is serving a probationary sentence for a street-racing crash that

killed Antioch High School student Cynthia Perez in 2013. The Lake County Sheriff's Office is actively searching for Betancourt, officials said Monday. Stone said Betancourt appears to have thrown away a year's worth of accomplishments and now faces a possible prison sentence on his guilty plea to aggravated DUI in the death of Perez. He could also face a mandatory consecutive sentence for escape if he is convicted on the new charge. Escape is a Class 2 felony that carries a two- to five-year prison sentence upon conviction. "Everyone knows Jeremy has certain intellectual deficiencies," Stone said. "He would have graduated

high school in June, which would have been a major, if not phenomenal, accomplishment." Betancourt, an Antioch resident, had completed more than 200 hours of the 250 hours of community service hours that were part of his sentence, Stone said, adding that his client also completed nearly a year of periodic imprisonment. "Now it's all gone for naught," Stone said. A probation report noted that Betancourt may have to take summer school to finish his requirements for high school graduation. Last year, Betancourt received a probationary sentence, including periodic imprisonment, after he pleaded guilty to aggravated DUI for the 2013 crash that caused the death of Perez. Under terms of the periodic imprisonment, he was only to be released from custody to attend high school or counseling. The Lake County State's Attorney's Office filed a petition last week to revoke Betancourt's probation for violations of his probation, including attempting to bring a cellphone and cigarettes into the community-based corrections center where he was being held. Stone said he is discouraged that Betancourt is in such a serious situation over

initial probation violations that the attorney said were not criminal actions, but an example of Betancourt "clowning around." The court clearly did not see it that way. When Betancourt did not appear at Wednesday's hearing on the petition to revoke his probation, Judge Victoria Rossetti issued a \$250,000 bench warrant for his arrest. The state's attorney's office then filed escape charges against Betancourt, and a \$1 million arrest warrant was issued Friday by Judge Christen Bishop. The negotiated deal under which Betancourt pleaded guilty had capped any potential prison sentence at 10 years. In exchange for his guilty plea, additional charges, including reckless homicide, were

dismissed. Rossetti sentenced Betancourt to four years of intensive probation to include 30 months of periodic imprisonment. Betancourt was warned at his sentencing hearing that any proven violation of his probation would likely result in a prison sentence. According to prosecutors, on June 24, 2013, Betancourt had smoked marijuana and then participated in a street race on Route 120 at speeds in excess of 20 miles over the limit, leading to the crash. Perez, 16, had been a passenger in Betancourt's car, and she was killed when he lost control in a one-vehicle rollover accident.

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## Checkpoint nets eight DUI, drug arrests in county

Deputies issue 34 citations during enforcement effort

NEWS-SUN

Lake County Sheriff's deputies made four arrests each for driving under the influence and possession of drugs overnight Friday during a roadside safety check in Libertyville Township. The enhanced enforcement effort was held from 11 p.m. to 3 a.m. at the

intersection of state Route 21 and Casey Road. A total of 34 citations were written, including some for driving on a suspended license and others for driving without a valid license. "A roadside safety check is an effective tool for generating voluntary compliance by the motoring public," Sheriff Mark Curran said in a statement. According to Curran, increasing the number of unannounced enforcement



STACEY WESCOTT/CHICAGO TRIBUNE  
A police officer gives a driver a field sobriety test. A Lake County roadside safety check Friday netted eight arrests.

zones throughout the county encourages residents to arrange for a designated driver or not drive after drinking. It also reinforces seat belt laws, he said. An average of one alcohol-related traffic death occurs every 45 minutes across the country, and alcohol and drug impairment are significant factors in over 40 percent of all fatal motor vehicle crashes in Illinois, according to a sheriff's office news release. "Each year in Illinois, hundreds of lives are lost in alcohol-related crashes. Do not risk losing your license,

your car, your freedom or your life. If you drive impaired, law enforcement will arrest you," Curran said. The sheriff's office will continue the extra enforcement throughout May. The roadside checks are funded through a grant from the National Highway Administration, part of the U.S. Department of Transportation. The grant is administered by the Division of Traffic Safety in the Illinois Department of Transportation.

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## Sentencing set in Waukegan, Antioch deaths

Hearings this week for 2014 and 2012 murder cases

By JIM NEWTON  
News-Sun

Sentencing hearings for defendants in two separate murder cases are scheduled this week in Lake County Circuit Court. Thomas Albea, a Waukegan man convicted of first-degree murder for fatally punching his girlfriend's 3-year-old son in the stomach, is set to receive his sentence Wednesday morning before Judge Mark Levitt. Convicted in a March bench trial, Albea faces 20 to 60 years in prison. During the trial, prosecutors Eric Kalata and Victor O'Block said Albea, who was 18 at the time of the 2011 murder, became angry when the child, X'Zavion Charleston, supposedly swore while playing the video game "Mortal Kombat." Albea responded by punching the boy several times in the stomach at about 11 p.m. Sept. 14, 2011. During videotaped interviews by Waukegan police detectives the next morning, Albea said he was making dinner for the child when he heard him swear because his character died in the video game. Albea eventually told police, which was videotaped and played at the trial, that he didn't hit the



Albea Axtell

child "more than 10 times." Charleston died at about 5 p.m. Sept. 15, 2014, in Chicago. A sentencing hearing for Michael Axtell, convicted of murder in the Antioch Township beating death of his girlfriend, is scheduled for Thursday afternoon before Judge Victoria Rossetti. In a bench trial before Rossetti this year, Axtell was found guilty of murdering 40-year-old Tammy Stone during an altercation in her Antioch Township home in October 2012. Axtell faces a sentencing range of 20 to 60 years in prison. According to assistant state's attorneys Jeff Pavletic and Eric Kalata, Axtell struck Stone three separate times with his fist, with the final one being the fatal blow, during an argument the two had after returning home from a bar on Oct. 24, 2012. Both defendants are being held in Lake County Jail without bail.

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Pick 4 midday	0419 / 6
Lucky Day Lotto midday	10 16 24 35 39
Pick 3 evening	617 / 0
Pick 4 evening	4915 / 4
Lucky Day Lotto evening	03 04 13 27 32
May 6 Powerball: \$80M	
May 7 Lotto: \$8.5M	
<b>WISCONSIN</b>	
<b>May 5</b>	
Pick 3	766
Pick 4	6880
Badger 5	03 08 13 23 24
SuperCash	04 05 21 25 31 35
<b>INDIANA</b>	
<b>May 5</b>	
Daily 3 midday	323
Daily 4 midday	9031
Daily 3 evening	728
Daily 4 evening	7641
Cash 5	not available
<b>MICHIGAN</b>	
<b>May 5</b>	
Daily 3 midday	748
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Daily 4 evening	6453
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U.S. EPA Accepting Comments  
on the  
Cleanup Plan for Tar Pollution  
North Shore Gas South Plant  
Waukegan, Illinois

Open House: 3 to 6 p.m.  
Public Hearing: 6 to 7:30 p.m.  
May 20, 2015  
Comment Period: May 6 – June 5, 2015

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recently issued a proposed plan to clean up an area of undissolved tar-like liquids beneath the North Shore Gas South Plant. Written comments on the proposed plan can be sent between May 6 and June 5, 2015 in these ways:

- By mail to: Heriberto León, Community Involvement Coordinator, U.S. EPA Region 5 (SI-7J), 77 W. Jackson Blvd., Chicago, IL 60604.
- Via the Web at: [www.epa.gov/region5/cleanup/northshoregassouth](http://www.epa.gov/region5/cleanup/northshoregassouth).
- Fax to: 312-697-2754
- Email: [leon.heriberto@epa.gov](mailto:leon.heriberto@epa.gov).

U.S. EPA officials will answer individual questions about the plan at an **open house** from 3 to 6 p.m. They will also make a formal presentation and accept written and oral comments at a **public hearing** from 6 to 7:30 p.m. Both the open house and public meeting will be on **Wednesday, May 20**, at the Lilac Cottage in Bowen Park, 1911 N. Sheridan Road, Waukegan. U.S. EPA will make its plan final only after reviewing all comments. The proposed cleanup plan may be modified based on new information or public comments so your opinion is important.

U.S. EPA is recommending a cleanup plan to manage an area of undissolved tar-like liquids called dense non-aqueous phase liquid, or DNAPL. This hazardous material lies beneath the North Shore Gas Former South Plant MGP site. The plan calls for removing DNAPL using recovery wells and treating it off-site. DNAPL is contaminating the underground water at the site.

More information is available at the Waukegan Public Library, 128 N. County St., and at [www.epa.gov/region5/cleanup/northshoregassouth](http://www.epa.gov/region5/cleanup/northshoregassouth).

For special accommodation at the May 20 public meeting, contact U.S. EPA's Heriberto León by May 15 at 800-621-8431, Ext. 66163, 8:30 a.m. – 4 30 p.m., weekdays.

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